CLAIMS

1   1.   A method comprising

2   enabling a party to a negotiation to create a document

3 containing text, typed data, and formulas configured to generate

4 optional texts,

5   enabling a party to the negotiation to manipulate the

6 document as a hierarchically structured set of containers, and

7 permitting a party to view protected portions of the document only

8 upon presentation of a cipher key associated with those portions.

1   2.   A method comprising

2   enabling a party to a negotiation to create a document

3 containing text, typed data, and formulas configured to generate

4 optional texts,

5   enabling a party to the negotiation to manipulate the

6 document as a hierarchically structured set of containers, and

7   maintaining a version history of portions of the document

8 sufficient to enable a user to view and display changes between

9 successive versions of the document.

1   3.   A method comprising

2   enabling a party to a negotiation to create a document

3   containing text, typed data, and formulas configured to generate

4   optional texts,

5   enabling a party to the negotiation to add annotations to the

6   document, and

7   maintaining a version history of portions of the document

8   sufficient to enable a user to view and display changes between

9   successive versions of the document.

1   4.   A method comprising

2   enabling a party to a negotiation to create a document

3   containing text, typed data, and formulas configured to generate

4   optional texts,

5   enabling a party to the negotiation to manipulate the

6   document as a hierarchically structured set of containers,

7   permitting a party to view protected portions of the

8   document only upon presentation of a cipher key associated with

9   those portions, and

10   maintaining a version history of portions of the document

11   sufficient to enable a user to view and display changes between

12   successive versions of the document.

1   5.   A method comprising

2   enabling a party to the negotiation to create a document

3   containing text, typed data, and formulas configured to generate

4   optional texts,

5   enabling a party to the negotiation to manipulate the

6   document as a hierarchically structured set of containers,

7   enabling a party to a negotiation to add annotations to the

8   document,

9   permitting a party to view protected portions of the

10   document only upon presentation of a cipher key associated with

11   those portions, andmaintaining a version history of portions of the

12   document sufficient to enable a user to view and display changes

13   between successive versions of the document.

1   6.   The method of claim 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, also including

2   transmitting a state and history of the negotiation from user

3   to user using a network communication protocol.

1   7.   The method of claim 6 in which the protocol includes e-

2   mail, client-server file transfer, or peer-to-peer file transfer.

1   8.   Apparatus comprising a medium on which are stored

2   data structures capable of configuring a machine to enable

3   a negotiation of a document, the data structures comprising

4	linked discrete elements, each of the linked
5	elements having value binding and formula features,
6	each of the elements being linked into a hierarchical
7	structure,
8	each of the linked elements having annotation
9	features,
10	the data structures being expressed in a serialized
11	data format that represents content of the linked discrete
12	elements encrypted separately for each group of users able
13	to access parts of the document,
14	the content of linked discrete elements being
15	associated with a version history capable of configuring a
16	machine to render complete document versions, and
17	software capable of configuring the machine to
18	enable a user to create the document, edit the document by
19	adding new versions, attach messages, add, remove and
20	change the access rights of users with respect to individual
21	document elements, compare and merge documents, and
22	purge version histories.